Chapter 7: Consultation

1. About this Chapter

1.1 This chapter outlines House policy on consultation with the Trade Unions and it explains:

- the House position on Trade Unions
- our consultation procedures.

2. Principles

2.1 The House of Commons currently recognises four Trade Unions:

- for pay bands A – E: the FDA, SCS, PCS and Prospect
- for Catering pay bands: GMB and PCS.

2.2 The Trade Unions advise, defend and support their members at work. They also represent their members’ professional and employment interests in discussion and consultation with management.

2.3 The House of Commons considers it to be in your interest to belong to a Trade Union. A Trade Union can represent your point of view on all kinds of questions affecting pay, conditions of service and welfare. Staff are strongly encouraged to join the appropriate Trade Union.

2.4 If you are not sure which Trade Union covers your post or you need any other information related to Trade Union organisation in the House, contact the Trade Union Side Administrator (tusa@parliament.uk) on ext. 5611. Further information is on the Intranet at: Trade Unions.

2.5 The recognised Trade Unions have a right of access to the Commission, notwithstanding any delegation of the Commission’s functions, as provided in the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978.

3. Arrangements

Facilities Agreement

3.1 The Facilities Agreement sets out the arrangements by which management and elected Trade Union Representatives undertake their employee relations duties. It covers time off for Trade Union business and provision to Trade Union Representatives of facilities such as office accommodation, equipment and access to documents. If you are elected as a Trade Union official or if you manage someone who is, you will need to become familiar with this agreement. The Facilities Agreement is available on the intranet:

Facilities Agreement (PDF 2.25 MB)

Subscriptions

3.2 Members of staff pay their Trade Unions subscriptions by deduction direct from their salaries through payroll or by direct debit from bank accounts.

Opting out of the political levy
3.3 Each Trade Union is required by law to have a separate political fund which is used to support campaigning work on behalf of Trade Union members. If you wish to receive more information on the way your Trade Union uses its political fund, you should contact your Trade Union Representative.

3.4 The payment to the political levy is likely to be less than the sum of £1 per member per year. You can make regular payments to the political levy (a payment to the Trade Unions political fund) by deduction from salary or direct debit.

3.5 Staff have the right to opt out of the political levies operated by those recognised Trade Unions which have a political fund. Should you decide that you no longer wish to contribute to the political levy you should notify the membership representative of your Trade Union. They will follow the procedures for the individual Trade Union. That may involve the representative in notifying Payroll Services on your behalf. Alternatively, the representative may provide you with a form for you to notify Trade Union headquarters of your wishes. Your Trade Union subscription will continue to be collected either directly from your salary or by direct debit in the usual way.

4. **Whitley Committee**

4.1 Consultations with recognised Trade Unions take place under the umbrella of the Whitley Committee. Membership of the main Whitley Committee comprises a Management Side and a Trade Union Side.

4.2 The aims of the Whitley system are to:

- secure the greatest measure of cooperation between Management and staff with a view to increased efficiency in the House of Commons Service combined with the well-being of the staff employed by the Commission
- provide a mechanism for consultation and discussion, as appropriate, as well as dealing with grievances
- bring together the experience and points of view of all concerned.

4.3 Four sub-committees report to the Whitley Committee, namely the General Purposes Sub-Committee, the Catering Services Joint Consultative Committee, the Maintenance and Operations Joint Consultative Committee and the Health and Safety Committee.

4.4 More information about the Whitley Committee and the Whitley Constitution is available on the intranet:

[Whitley Committee](#)